



The National Estuary Program was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act to identify, restore, and protect nationally significant estuaries of the United States. Unlike traditional regulatory approaches to environmental protection, the NEP targets a broad range of issues and engages local communities in the process. The program focuses not just on improving water quality in an estuary, but on maintaining the integrity of the whole system — its chemical, physical, and biological properties, as well as its economic, recreational, and aesthetic values.

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Fact Sheet/March 2000

# Great Bay and the Seacoast



*NH Coastal Program*

## What Makes Great Bay And The Seacoast Special?

- The Great Bay is a relatively pristine region with a diversity of habitats that are important for waterfowl, migratory birds, and rare species such as bald eagles.
- Shellfish, eelgrass, salt marsh and other marine plants and organisms can be found in the area's harbors and bays.
- There are a variety of rare species and communities such as Atlantic White Cedar swamps.
- The area contains groundwater wells in towns which have few alternate sources of drinking water.

## Why Does Great Bay Need Special Attention?

- Storm water runoff needs to be reduced in order to improve water quality.
- Habitat areas need protection, especially along the estuary and streams, for water quality and wildlife improvement.



## What Are The Long Term Goals?

- Triple the acreage of open shellfish beds (to 75% of all beds) and triple number of harvestable clams and oysters in NH estuaries.
- Preserve 3000 acres in Great Bay watershed area.
- Increase the acreage of salt marshes, wetlands and other estuarine habitats.

## Progress/Goals for the Future

### What Partnership Progress Has Been Made?

- Middle Ground, a 40 acre shellfish bed, was reopened.
- Over 1,000 acres of waterfront habitat were protected along Great Bay by outright ownership and/or conservation easements.
- Two million dollars have been raised for additional land protection.
- A new fish ladder has opened 40 acres of spawning grounds for anadromous fish habitat.
- Over 80 acres of salt marsh and eelgrass have been restored.
- Completed the Exeter River Watershed plan.
- Funding was secured for identifying rare turtles in the parts of Great Bay.

### What Are the Major Actions Planned For 2000?

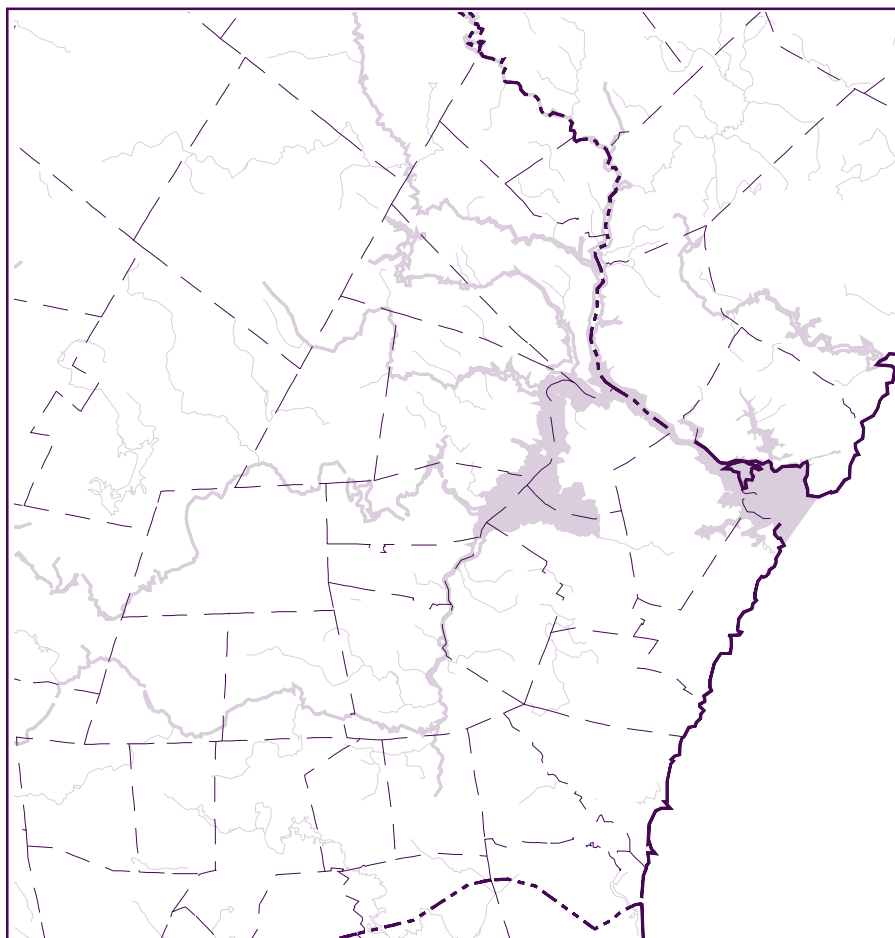
- Complete the draft NEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan.
- Protect an additional 500 acres of habitat.
- Raise additional money for land protection.
- Open 45 additional acres of spawning grounds and shellfish beds.
- Restore 20 more of salt marsh and eelgrass.

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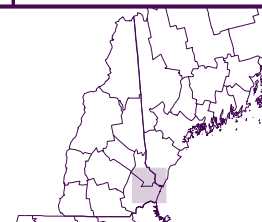


## Who Are The Partners?

EPA New England • NH Department of Environmental Services • NH Office of State Planning • NH Fish and Game • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service • University of New Hampshire • NH Audubon • Nature Conservancy • Society for the Protection of NH Forests • Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve and NOAA • Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership • Exeter River Watershed • Lamprey River Watershed • Rockingham Planning Commission • Strafford Planning Commission • 20+ local towns



- Great Bay
- // Town Line
- Major River
- Minor River



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Note: EPA-New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.